

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LUSAKA 01460 241603Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----241742Z 023587 /43

P R 241515Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5725
INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 1460

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR RH US UK ZA
SUBJ: CHONA ON THE RHODESIAN NEGOTIATIONS

1. AFTER AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S DEPARTURE, CHONA CALLED
TO SUGGEST WE CHAT BRIEFLY ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF
NEGOTIATIONS. THE BURDEN OF HIS MESSAGE WAS TO PUT
US ON GUARD AGAINST THE BRITISH.

2. HE WAS PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS THAT WE NOT PERMIT THE
PROCESS TO BE DELAYED BY THE BRITISH. IN RESPONSE TO HIS
REQUEST FOR AN OUTLINE OF OUR TIMETABLE, I EXPLAINED THAT
GRAHAM HOPED IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO WRITE A DOCUMENT FOR
SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENT IN NOVEMBER. THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS
COULD BE COMPLETED BY JANUARY. THE LEGALITIES NECESSARY FOR THE
REST OF THE PROCESS WERE NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR BUT I SAID THE
BRITISH WERE EXPECTING THE CARHLNR PERIOD TO LAST FROM THREE
TO SIX MONTHS. THEIR MOST CAUTIOUS ESTIMATE STILL ALLOWED FOR
INDEPENDENCE IN 1978. CHONA REPEATED, AS HE HAD AT LUNCH,
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THE HOPE WE COULD STICK TO THE MARCH 1 DATE NEGOTIATED IN
GENEVA. I SAID I THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE DIFFICULT. I AGREED WE
SHOULD MAKE EVERY ATTEMPT TO MOVE ON AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE
BUT NOTED THAT THE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS, THE DRAWING OF
CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES AND ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN WOULD REQUIRE
A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TIME.

3. CHONA ASKED WHETHER THE BRITISH HAD CHOSEN THEIR CANDIDATE AND THEN ANSWERED HIMSELF BY SAYING HE THOUGHT THEY HAD INITIALLY BACKED NKOMO, THEN HAD SWUNG TO MUZOREWA, AND WERE NOW UNDECIDED. HE FOLLOWED THAT BY A SURPRISINGLY EMPHATIC STATEMENT EXPRESSING THE VIEW THAT, LIKE THE U.S., HE DIDN'T REALLY CARE WHICH LEADER WAS CHOSEN. HE JUST HOPED THE SELECTION COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED SOON AND ZAMBIA COULD BE RID OF THE PROBLEM.

4. WITH REGARD TO THE ELECTION PROCESS, CHONA SAID HE HOPED IT WAS NOT TOO LATE FOR ALL THE PARTIES TO AGREE TO PARTICIPATE. THEY HAD BEEN WILLING TO DO SO AT GENEVA BUT HE SAID CONSIDERABLE TIME HAS PASSED SINCE THEN AND HE IS NO LONGER SO SURE. I OUTLINED TO CHONA, AS GRAHAM AND I HAD DONE FOR MINISTER OF STATE SILWIZYA LAST WEEK AND BOTSWANA FOREIGN MINISTER MOGWE IN GABORONE, THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF A CONSTITUTION AND PROBLEMS OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD. HE SEEMED INTERESTED AND ENCOURAGED, RECOGNIZING THAT THE CRUCIAL QUESTION WAS SMITH'S ACCEPTANCE OF UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE OR SOMETHING CLOSE TO IT. AGAIN HE WAS CRITICAL OF OWEN'S REFUSAL TO COME OUT PUBLICLY IN FAVOR OF ONE MWN ONE VOTE IN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE LAST WEEK. HE ALSO CITED A BBC BROADCAST BY ONE OF ITS SOUTHERN AFRICAN CORRESPONDENTS ABOUT CONTINUING RACISM IN THE U.S. AS UNFAIR CRITICISM.

5. FINALLY, CHONA ASKED WHETHER, IF I GOT BACK IN TIME, I COULD BRIEF THEM ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TALKS BEFORE THE PRESIDENT LEFT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE ON MONDAY.

6. COMMENT: I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT CHONA WAS TAKING A SOMEWHAT CONFIDENTIAL

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MORE FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEADERSHIP AMONG THE ZIMBABWEAN NATIONALISTS THAN EARLIER. HIS BROTHER, ATTORNEY GENERAL MAINZA CHONA, PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE IN THE SUNDAY TIMES MAY 22 RECOUNTING IN REMARKABLY OBJECTIVE FASHION THE HISTORY OF THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS AND TREATING NKOMO AND MUZAREWA EVEN-HANDEDLY. ZAMBIA'S DESIRE TO BE RELIEVED OF THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM, RECENT PATRIOTIC FRONT YETBACKS AND CONTINUING NATIONALIST RIVALRY MAY INCLINE CHONA AND PRESIDENT KAUNDA TO BACK OFF SOMEWHAT FROM THEIR INSISTENCE ON ULTIMATE ZIMBABWEAN LEADERSHIP BY NKOMO AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT.
LOW

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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Sent Date: 24-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Event:
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